

Vera Vratuša¹
Faculty of Philosophy
Dpt. of Sociology
Belgrade University

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WHERE DOES THE 'THIRD WAY' LEAD

In this paper author examines unusual phenomenon that 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm between 'old' social democracy and neo-liberalism, elaborated by sociologists in Great Britain, Germany, France and US in 1990s, the editorial writer for the newest Collection of social transformation processes' research findings in Serbia explicitly, together with other contributors, promotes as the most adequate approach to examination of contemporary societies a dozen of years later. Curiosity consists in the fact that the end of the first decade of the XXI Century presents precisely the historical moment in which explosive manifestation of systemic global accumulation of capital crisis empirically reveals inherent contradictions of both capitalist mode of production and the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm.

The key finding of the internationally known and domestic partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm main theses' critical analysis is that they lead to normalization of 'risks' capitalist social relations reproduced on the basis of an implicit or explicit ideological claim that there is no alternative to them.

Key words: Third Way, social democracy, neo-liberalism, systemic crisis, normalization, capitalism.

1. Theoretical and methodological framework of the research

A stimulus for posing the title question and the attempt to seek out the answer to it in this paper gave the titles *Risk society* and 'In the search of the Third Way' which the editor Vujović Sreten (2008, *ibid.* in further text) gave to the Collection and to the introductory text for contributions containing diverse research approaches and findings of eighteen authors concerning changes, inequalities and social problems in Serbia in the last decade of the XX century and the first decade of the XXI century.² The critical content analysis of this somewhat belated local reception of the theoretical terminological fashion within the mainstream international sociology will serve as the typical case study for the examination of common global social conditions and processes influencing the actual institutional domination of

¹ vvratusa@f.bg.ac.rs, < <http://veravratusasociology.wikispaces.com> >

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the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ theoretical, methodological and ideological paradigm in the universities, research institutes and sociological journals world-wide.

It is well known that it were first of all sociologists Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck who articulated the paradigm of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ in the 1990’s, striving to provide a theoretical basis for the revision of practical activity of social democratic parties confronted with neo-liberal attacks of conservative parties on the heritage of the so called welfare states. In a nutshell, the pioneers of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ recommended the combination of the dynamism of the market competition pleaded for by the political ‘Right’, and social justice and solidarity pleaded for by the political ‘Left’, trying to avoid the excesses of both the free market and the state socialism.

The question concerning the social content and factors influencing the explicit choice of just this paradigm re-imposes itself with increased intensity some dozen years later in the context of the explosive manifestation of the global accumulation of capital systemic crisis. This structural crisis namely empirically reveals that there really exists the inherent contradiction of realizing the Third Way partisans’ idea of “equality of opportunity” within capitalist market relations, even though this idea was theoretically criticized even before the explosive manifestation of the crisis (for ex., Anderson, P. 2000, Ballet, 2001).

The attempt to answer the title question will be realized through the critical content analysis of two groups of texts.

The first group of texts contains the main theses of internationally known sociologists which the domestic editorial writer emphasizes as essential while he tries to document and justify his recent endorsement of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm as generally the most adequate approach to researching problems of contemporary societies. In order to better understand social correlates, motives and arguments of the domestic editorial writer, the critical content analysis of the main theses of the internationally famous partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm will always begin by the paraphrases and citations from the domestic translations of the main books of Beck (2001a;2001b), Giddens (1998, 2003) and Heywood (2005) which the editorial writer himself used in order to describe as faithfully as possible to the original model the main characteristics of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk society’ paradigm.

The second group of texts contains the chief findings of those domestic sociologists whom the editorial writer praises the most due to their successful, in his opinion, application of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm to the analysis of the *macro* level social changes in their contributions to this Collection.³ The

³ Due to the limited space, however, from this paper must be omitted the analysis of the chief findings of the authors whom the editorial writer has also classified among the domestic followers of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ who apply this paradigm at the *mezzo* and *micro* research level. The advantage of this extorted shortening consists in the fact that in this way will be avoided repeating of isomorphic critical analysis of the favorite fashionable exp-

detailed analysis of original texts on the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' and description of similarities and differences between them is out of the scope of this paper's main aim, which is to bring to light the social isomorphism of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm local and international institutional domination.

2. Critical content analysis of the theses of the internationally known partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm which domestic editorial writer emphasized the most

Precisely the slogan which the editorial writer chose for the motto of his introductory promotion of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm, somewhat paradoxically, can serve the best as the leading thread for the critical content analysis of this paradigms' main theses: 'Problems of today can not be resolved if we still think in the way in which we created them' (ibid, 7). The ensuing critical content analysis will demonstrate that in spite of terminological innovation, the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm's main theses remain within the ontological, epistemological and practical political thought framework which simultaneously expresses and hides social mechanisms of contradictory reproduction of the very social problems which these theses attempt to interpret and contribute to solve.

2.1. Negation of the capitalist character of contemporary societies and of the globalization process

The key thesis for the understanding of the way of thinking of the internationally known 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm partisans is contained in the first part of the editorial writer's citation of the domestic translation of the answer which Ulrich Beck gave to the hypothetical question posed with the children's cruelty concerning interrogation in which society we are living in: 'I would have to break through many *nots* – not capitalism or late capitalism, not industrial society, not society of service activities, and also not post modernity – to the answer: in *moderna* that begins to doubt in herself, who shall, if all goes well, make the doubt the measure and constructor of her own self-restraint and self-change' (ibid., 8, Bek, 2001a: 246) The basic proposition for the understanding of the way of thinking of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' partisans is therefore the negation that we are living in society in which dominate capitalist relations of life reproduction. From this key negation throughout the entire history of sociology

recessions of the domestic followers of the 'Third Way', the main function of which is to avoid the designation of contemporary societies as capitalist in the social segment selected for research, from urban and rural problematic, over the marriage and family, to education, mental institutions and minor delinquency. Such shortening is justified as well by the fact that editorial writer is hesitating himself whether he should or not classify some of these authors dealing with the *mezzo* and *micro* research level among the followers of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' (ibid. 27, 28, 29).

stems the search for the allegedly more adequate name for the societies in which we live than the one which use theoretical, methodological and ideological heirs of the founders of the critical science of society. Beck opted for the minimal modification of the most widespread alternative name from the family of terms ‘modernization’ which use the heirs of the founders of the positive science of society, and named the society in which we live ‘second modernity’.

Leaning on the domestic translation of the key books of internationally renowned partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm, editorial writer generally emphasizes that ‘second modernity’ societies primarily characterizes the fact that ‘modern institutions become global’ (ibid, 8). Few pages later, drawing inspiration from the domestic translation of Heywood’s interpretation of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ theses among other theories (2005, 155, ibid, 14), editorial writer concludes that the main theme of the users of the expression ‘second modernity’ or ‘reflexive modernity’ is ‘dynamic market economy’ instead of the ‘command economy’ or ‘state intervention from above’, accompanied by ‘general acceptance of globalization’. Globalization is presented as a modernizing and democratizing force that liberates agents from both spatial and temporal confines of the traditional Western and non-Western culture and from political power of the nation state. The only reservation concerning the affirmative attitude toward the process and project of globalization, the editorial writer expresses while stressing his preference for the ‘transformationalist’ variant of globalization’s acceptance, according to which the process of globalization develops in contradictory way, encompassing tendencies that are often opposed one to another (ibid, 18-19) or in the words of Beck (2001a, 153) ‘modern ‘building elements’ (are) combined and merge with elements of anti modern’.

Negation of the capitalist character of ‘second modernity’ prevents partisans of all variants of acceptance of globalization, interpreted as a relatively new phenomenon of the second half of the XX century, to recognize in globalization the several centuries old process of the expansion of capitalist relations all over the globe ever since the violent separation of direct producers of use values from the means of survival (Vratuša, 2001). This violent separation transformed all conditions of self-reproduction, including the work force of direct producers, into the commodity, whose exchange value, average socially necessary work time for its production, is expressed in money as the general equivalent on the oligopolistically imperfect world market. Karl Marx had already in the *Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848, demonstrated that permanent attempt to conquer more as cheap as possible sources of raw materials, working force and new markets than the competition, drives capitalist private owners of the means of survival to violently expand capitalist production relations all over the world.

All that partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm perceive while negating the capitalist character of contemporary societies is the disappearance of the old industrial society and its substitution by the ‘Risk Society’. In the ‘Risk Society’ allegedly dominate produced risks which according to partisans of

the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm today stem less from the natural⁴ dangers, but much more from the uncertainties to which led the development of science and information and other technology especially in the last forty years (Ibid, 9, Giddens, 2003: 697; Beck, 2001b). Beck, Giddens and like-minded partisans of the 'risk' society actually in the mechanistic manner reduce the specificities of contemporary 'information' or 'knowledge' society predominantly to the positive effects of the information technology enabling world-wide real-time financial markets and social and cultural interdependencies in general. Information technology driven globalization according to the partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' enables de-traditionalization of the local culture and pluralistic indigenization and hybridization of the global culture. According to the belief of 'Third Way' partisans, direct democratic public action of nongovernmental organizations from below through satellite television and internet connects local public spheres into global democratic public sphere, making the political and corporate powers more responsible and less bureaucratic. From this technologically optimistic perspective, the problems of cultural imperialism are less visible as well as the role of non governmental organizations, which are often financed from the para-governmental sources, in their spreading.

Partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm do not elaborate the influence of capitalist market drive for profit on the destructive development and mode of use of contemporary technology. Insufficiently critical technological optimism prevents the partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm to notice that the liberating and pluralizing potential of web technology is called into question and endangered by pre-structuration, filtration, totalitarian surveillance and commercial manipulation of knowledge, information, communication, association and public political action, reducing them to formation of opinions separated from the institutionalized power of making and implementing decisions (Lewandowski, 2003). The 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm partisans, leave out of their sight the fact that it is the capitalist logic of technology development and use, and not the technology in itself, that causes most of the very 'uncertainties' and 'produced disasters' which they identified as the main characteristic of the 'Risk society' or 'Second Modernity' on all levels of social existence. Naomi Klein in her most informative 2007 book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* gives many examples how the most sophisticated technology of warfare and mind control, allegedly used for the needs of 'counter-terrorism' fight and 'homeland-security' is used in fact for inducement and exacerbation of social crises and disasters like civil wars. The aim of produced disasters is to eliminate all resistance to dismantling of the last remains of pre-capitalist and germs of post-capitalist collective and public property and to make extra profits in the business of post-disaster 'shock therapy' implementation in the form of neo-liberal, on private

⁴ The partisans of the "Third Way" paradigm are losing from their sight here that disasters like earthquakes and floods are caused not only by 'natural' causes but also by contradictory socio-historical conditions of the attempts to humanise nature and to naturalise humans.

gain of transnational corporate and financial capital oriented policy of re-construction, re-structuration and re-location.

Insensitive to critical interpretation of contemporary societies as capitalist societies like his internationally famous models, local editorial writer concludes his complete acceptance of the ‘second modernity’ and ‘Risk Society’ labeling of the domestic society, discarding the conceptual framework of the opposed ‘mode of reproduction’ paradigm as outmoded, by simply posing the suggestive rhetorical question: ‘Is (all above mentioned) not characteristic also for the contemporary Serbian society?’ (ibid, 8-9). The question whether a characterization of the domestic society as ‘capitalist peripheral society’ is maybe more adequate than its characterization as the ‘Risk Society’ is never posed.

2.2. Ignoring and disguising the class character of contemporary societies

Negation of the capitalist character of the dominant relations of life reproduction in contemporary societies by the partisans of the ‘Third Way’, produces as a consequence also ignoring and disguising, or in the words of the editorial writer, ‘relativization’ (ibid, 15) of the class character of societies in which we live. Expressions exploitation and oppression appear rarely or never in the texts of the partisans of the ‘Third Way’. Conflicts and inequalities between gender and ethnic groups are mentioned more often, but partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm these allegedly ‘new’ conflicts within ‘second modernity’ are emptying from their class aspects. Expecting from global restructuring of the urban economy greater social inclusion and equality among city residents, partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ keep silent about the empirical findings that shifts from manufacturing to globally oriented service industries in global cities like New York, London and Tokyo, generated caste-like polarization (Sassen, 1991).

Partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm instead of the class analysis of social structure offer ‘reflexivity’, ‘ambivalence’ and ‘skepticism’ as a ‘new way of thinking’. This ‘new way of thinking’, however, besides not being ‘new’, is limited from the outset by the starting assumption about the non-class character of ‘risk’ societies of the ‘second modernity’. Closing their eyes in front of the violent means which ruling classes use each time when they come across the resistance to their self-reproduction in the privileged social positions, partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm enthusiastically promote, along the ‘new way of thinking’, the ‘new way of acting’ as well – ‘civilizing the conflict’. According to the partisans of the ‘Third Way’, our own doubt whether we are ourselves right, presents sufficient condition to transform enemies into those who doubt together. Even though interests of us and other people can be diametrically opposed, they will be according to the ‘Third Way’ partisans identified as such and thus ‘relativised’, there will be negotiations concerning them and solutions will be

sought. Editorial writer calls himself upon Beck while concluding that in the alleged era of 'reflexive modernity' characterized by conflicts of different knowledge claims instead of opposed classes' conflicts, these conflicts can be no more dogmatized into enmities which could justify creation or starting of the machine for the mutual breaking of heads (Ibid, 13).

This negligence of the class contradictions of actually still globally predominant capitalist mode of reproduction hampers partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm to conduct the immanent criticism of contemporary society. Furthermore, negation of the antagonistic class contradictions in contemporary societies, opens the way for the apologetic incantations of the consensus within the community of simultaneously autonomous and interdependent, entrepreneurial and just individuals who are aware not only of their rights but also of their moral responsibilities and essential harmony of interests. The focus of analysis is moved from the 'old' class divisions, to the participation of the so called 'new actors', like transnational associations of citizens, social movements, professional and expert groups, within the 'sub-politics' of discovering the political and of the global solutions outside the aims of political institutions and parties of the first industrial modernization (ibid, 9-10, Beck, 2001a:10-11).

2.3. Double standards in relation to nation state sovereignty and nationalism

Having in mind negation of the capitalist and antagonistic class character of the process and project of globalization (Vratuša, 2004), it is not surprising that the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm partisans advocate abandonment of the ideal of sovereignty of the nation state as one of the key aims of the 'first' or industrial modernization, together with accompanying manifestations of 'ethnonationalism and its tragic effects in former socialist countries, and especially in Yugoslavia' (Ibid 15). Even though the editorial writer considers the division on the sociopolitical 'left' and 'right' superseded and outdated like his internationally renowned models and citation sources (Giddens, 1994), he nevertheless recognizes the existence of the remains of 'left' and 'right' in Serbia and offers the following categorization: 'On the left there are orthodox communists, nostalgic socialists and new social-democrats. On the right there are liberal and ethno-cultural nationalists – exposed and hidden'. Without concealing his preference for 'new social democracy' editorial writer expresses his opinion that among the collaborators of the research team of the Institute the 'most numerous' are those who are inclined just towards new social democratic practical political orientation (ibid, 11).⁵ Editorial writer thus concludes: "I am certain that the boundary between ethno liberal and ethno cultural nationalism is too thin and easy to cross, as well as that among us

⁵ Due to the already mentioned space limitations, critical analysis of the findings of 'minority' contributors to this Collection has to be left out from this paper as well.

there can hardly be ‘good nationalism’” (Ibid, 12). Such formulation suggests that among some other people there can be ‘good nationalism’ and that the advice about leaving behind the ideal of the sovereignty of the nation state is not meant to hold true for all people equally.

The ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm partisans are not able to negate the fact that transnational corporations and financial institutions still have national bases and that respective states intervene to help ‘their’ transnational capital when needed. Partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm as well keep silent about the fact that nation state security services of societies militarily organized into NATO, like the ones in which live Giddens and Beck, are inducing and exacerbating just these ethno-nationalisms in former Yugoslavia and other countries that the ruling classes of the NATO member countries are attempting to (re)colonize. In accordance with the interests of the financial big capital to control sources of strategic and lower cost raw materials, labor power, markets and communication corridors, these internationally organised national state repression apparatuses are applying the age old imperial rule ‘divide in order to rule’, by training and arming local separatist groups and infiltrating foreign hired terrorists, as an prelude to imperialistic subjugation of targeted countries (Elsässer, Jürgen, 2008). The partisans of the ‘Third Way’ are ignoring that the key role of the strong nation state apparatuses of the societies of the alleged ‘reflexive modernity’ in the center of the world capitalist system is in fact expansion of the capitalist social relations to the territories of the weak nation states on the periphery of the world capitalist system and destruction of the ‘surplus’ capital and people in order to make conditions for new cycle of profitable capital investment through war (Vratuša, 1993, 1995). The partisans of the ‘Third way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm in the activity of the nation state apparatuses in the ‘Center’ of the world capitalist system, recognise only ‘the quest for the strategies of national prosperity in the conditions of the intensified global competition’ (Ibid, 16, Heywood, 2005: 158). It is important to notice that partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm in capitalist societies militarily organised into NATO, never intercede in favor of renouncement of the ‘strategies of national prosperity’, nor derogatively name such strategies ethnonationalism. Among the partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm, on the contrary, there are attempts to justify military interventions of the NATO countries in the countries targeted for imperial subjugation. Good example for such apologetics is the presentation of the NATO military intervention in the civil war on the territory of former Yugoslavia as the humanitarian attempt to protect human rights of the specific ethnic group presented as the sole victim and target of ethnic cleansing in a given civil war (compare for instance Giddens, 2003, 273). This apologetic rhetoric is however made senseless by the open admittance of the direct actors of the military intervention like Strobe Talbott, former US Deputy Secretary of State, that it was the resistance of ‘Milošević’s Yugoslavia’ to the ‘broader trends of political and economic reform – not the plight

of the Kosovo Albanians – that best explains NATO's war' (Talbot, 2005: XXII–XXIII).

The pragmatic appliers of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm in the everyday practice, from Blair and Clinton, through Schroeder and Lionel Jospin to Solana, empirically refuted wishful thinking of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' theoreticians about 'civilized dialogue'. They have without any 'tolerance' made the dialogue and negotiations impossible. They reached out exactly after the means for mass 'breaking of heads' and with radioactive ammunition, endangering in this way even the very biological survival not only of the present, but also of the future generations of people of all ethnic and class affiliations. Such genocidal endangering of the very survival of humanity, is the most expressed especially in the countries that find themselves along the key corridors for the transport of energy sources from former and actual colonies and neo-colonies into former and actual imperialistic powers under the US hegemony (Collon, 2000). A decade after the war legitimized by the partisans of the 'Third Way' paradigm, even the partisans of the 'Liberal Peace-Building' had to conclude on the basis of evidence that 'The Kosovan entity is heading towards mono-ethnic, majoritarian sovereignty, a weak economy and marginalized minority, hastened by threat of violence (or actual violence in March 2004) if Kosovo Albanians do not get their way. These are not indicators of a sustainable peace, liberal or otherwise. This is also true of economic liberalization. Neo-liberal models provide little in the way of social security or financial support for a population who mostly live on or below the poverty line with no income and in a subsistence economy' (Franks, Richmond, 2008:99).

2.4. Normalization of the effects of the global accumulation of capital

Negation of the capitalist, class and imperialist character of the so called 'second' or 'reflexive' modernity, makes it impossible to partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm to comprehend these 'risks' as processes of long duration structurally generated by the systemic contradictory imperatives of the capital accumulation in the world proportions. The unintended result of the quest for maximization of particular profit, presents the contrary tendency of the average profit rate to fall. This unintended consequence appears due to the fact that the increased social productivity of the live work force equipped more than competition with 'dead' labor objectified in the technology of the automated production process, reduces the exchange value and ejects from the wage earning jobs the live labor force, the unique commodity whose exclusive use value is to produce surplus value above its exchange value. The ideologists of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm, tend to 'normalize' the increasing unemployment and impoverishment as inevitability in the 'risk' society of second modernity, by ignoring the systemic contradiction of capitalist mode of production which tends to destroy its own prerequisite, payment capable demand. More or less openly the partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' are overtaking from the neo-liberals their aban-

donment of the aims of full employment, social security, social rights, elimination of poverty and equality of outcome (ibid, 10). Partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ just look for the ways for reduction of social problems within real capitalist relations of market competition of the private owners of commodities, which produce the above mentioned social problems in the first place, together with ever more intensive crises of hyper production. These crises are namely the effect of the irreconcilable and through mere reforms not eliminable contradictions between the potentially unlimited possibilities of the productivity of the social process of production increment, on the one hand, and narrow basis of the payment capable demand within the relationships of private profit appropriation that can be realized only under the condition of selling on the world market, on the other hand.

2.5. Endorsement of moralistically modified neoliberal aims of future capitalist social development

With the help of citations from the local translation of the interpreter and partisan of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ E. Heywood (2005: 155-158), editorial writer introduces us to the aims that should be endorsed instead of those that should be abandoned: competitive market state that invests into infrastructure, research, development and knowledge of the population in order to maximize the global offensive power of capital, dynamic market economy complemented with the communitarianism, negotiation, tolerance, consensus about the interdependence, moral responsibility and meritocratic helping to the excluded to include themselves into the society through equal chances to get an education, to find the wage job and thus to take the responsibility, rely on themselves and their own capabilities (Ibid, 14-17). Traditional left wing concern for egalitarianism is thus substituted by concern for equality of opportunities. Alleged equality of opportunities, however, leads inevitably to inequality of alleged merits that precludes substantive freedom and democracy.

Promoting cited neo-liberal aims slightly modified through mechanical addition of the community ethos from above, partisans of the ‘Third Way’ neglect that wage-work cannot help solve welfare problems of disabled and elderly and that competition on ‘flexible’ work market creates a category of employed-poor who find themselves in low paid and socially insecure work places. Capitalist education system is as well not able to contribute to the achievement of social equality. Within the framework of capitalist transformation of everything into a commodity, including knowledge reduced to information detached from the pursuit of truth, the system of education just reflects and maintains social inequalities (Bowles, Gintis, 1976) on the oligopolistic markets.

3. Critical analysis of the theses of domestic authors whom the editorial writer classified among the followers of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm

While proceeding with the critical analysis of the main theses and findings of Serbian sociologists whom the editorial writer praises the most for their successful application of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm in their research published in this and earlier collections of the ISRFF, we should keep in mind that we do not know whether they all agree with editorial writer's estimate that there are 'more similarities than differences' in understanding of contemporary societies between domestic and internationally known partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm (Ibid, 18). We will therefore in further examination put an accent on the similarities and differences of conceptual theoretical framework implemented in the texts of local and internationally known partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society'.

3.1. General acceptance of globalization in combination with nominally conflict oriented approach to research of contemporary societies

The author of the contribution "European identity of the Serbian political and economic elite" at the first sight does not look like as a 'typical' partisan of the 'Third way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm, if we start from the fact that he chose for his source of locally translated citations the book of the author who did not make it his first task to negate the capitalist character of contemporary societies (Castells, 2003). The domestic author however does not cite from his internationally known model's book the critique of exclusion and 'The Black Holes of Informational Capitalism'. Since the internationally known inspiration of the local author is like most partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' more promoting than criticizing globalization, it was easy to find a citation that characterizes the process of European integration, understood as an unquestionably desirable aim, as the simultaneous expression of globalization and reaction to the effects of globalization (Vuletić Vladimir in Ibid 37, Castells, 2003:335-342). Domestic author only now here examines whether there existed relationship between negative effects of globalization of 'network' information economy and systemic imperatives of the global capital accumulation.

Domestic author of the paper on European identity does not look like a 'typical' partisan of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' also on the basis of the fact that he does not mention as often as them value consensus within community, but focuses research on elites. Such orientation at the least in theory leaves place for predominantly conflict oriented research approach to the study of social structure and social interests within contemporary societies. Local author however does not

proceed with his research along the lines of social conflict. On the contrary this author justifies the focusing of sampling procedure to the political and economic elites, or more precisely two fractions of the ruling class, within one part of the first wave of Intune project of the speeded up process of EU integration research within which he participated. He argues namely that political and economic elites are the ‘motor and driving fuel’ of the process of EU integration from the end of the eighties of the twentieth century (Vuletić in Ibid, 39).

It is not surprising that the research on thus limited sample came to the expected result that the primary goal of both European and Serbian economic elite is the raising of the competitive capability of European economy. Only examined affiliates of European and Serbian political elites have somewhat more often (on average in 35% of cases) chosen the social security as important goal of European integration. Let us mention here important exception of the examined Great Britain’s political elite which had with the relative majority chosen the aim of greater competitive ability (47%), while on the contrary, political elites of Germany, Lithuania, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Austria had in an above average number of cases chosen the social security (from 45% do 75%). Examined political elites in Serbia are found to be the closest to political elites of France, Greece and Bulgaria, according to their above average option for the combination of both goals (from 38% to 65%).

Leaving out the greater part of the population from the international sample in this part of Intuna project, made it impossible to register, explain and understand the phenomenon of the rejection of the neo-liberal draft of the EU Constitution and implicitly of the greater competitive ability as the primary goal of the economic elites in countries in which the referendum expression of majority attitude toward this aspect of integration was at all enabled (France, Netherlands, Ireland in the first round). This phenomenon of the referendum rejection namely indicates that especially economic elites in the countries members of the EU and in Serbia do not reflect the preferences of the population in general concerning the desirable aims of European integration.

3.2. General acceptance of the market and entrepreneurship, questioning ‘new myths’ and normalization of insufficient buying power of population

In contrast to the previous author, the author of the contribution ‘Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial firms in Serbia from the year 1992 to 2006 – are there important changes?’ already at the first glance looks like the ‘typical’ partisan of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm on the basis of the fact that like the majority of internationally known partisans of this paradigm he avoids to characterize contemporary societies and the processes of social change in them as capitalist. As the substitution for their naming in Serbia this author offers vague expressions like ‘post-socialist transformation’, ‘destruction of society’ or ‘difficult transition’.

There is a little more positive content in the name of the society to which these processes of change should lead to: 'entrepreneurial society'

This author criticizes the legal definition and its statistical operationalization which identify entrepreneurs as 'physical persons which, in order to gain profit, establish shops and independently carry out activity'. Such definition reduces entrepreneurs to persons who independently and directly engage in specific business activity that is to bearers of the 'small businesses' in small and middle enterprises. This author is of the opinion, like the internationally known theoreticians from Schumpeter to von Mises he cites (gathered in the collection of Swedberg, 2000), that 'true entrepreneurs... establish and innovatively develop versatile enterprises, from those smallest to the biggest modern corporations' and that they are oriented towards creative and risky realization of their own business ideas among other things concerning how to maximize profit (Bolčić, Silvano in Ibid, 77).

Even though this author himself avoids using the expression capitalism, he differs from the majority of domestic sociologists whom the editorial writer classified among the followers of the 'Third Way' by quoting internationally known authors who bring into direct connection entrepreneurship and capitalism. This author differs as well from the majority of domestic and foreign followers of the 'Third Way' by his greater readiness, together with foreign authors like Davis, S.J., Haltiwanger, J. C., Schuh, S. (1998) to call into question the 'new myth' about small and middle private enterprises (SMEs in further text). Among SMEs in Serbia in 2006 there were the most numerous trade and service shops having up to 5 persons employed and not productive enterprises with more than 5 persons employed. They can hardly be the 'main motor force' of development and economically more successful not only than 'self managing' enterprises in social property but also more successful than 'big' enterprises in state and private ownership (Bolčić Silvano, in ibid, 78). This domestic partisan of the entrepreneurial society criticizes mentioned neo-liberal myth about 'doubtless superiority' of private ownership with regard to capital efficacy as an 'ideological and bookish judgment'. This judgment the majority of 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' domestic partisans take over from their international models and zealously advocate the 'de-blocking' of privatization. This judgment however rests upon the neglect of high amount of lost invested capital of private firms that were extinguished and are not active in business at the moment of the calculation of the profit rate on the invested fixed and working capital (Bolčić in Ibid, 98-100).

The contribution to the criticism of 'ideological and bookish judgment' of both neo-liberals and of allegedly alternative 'Third Way' partisans, gives as well the finding of this partisan of 'true entrepreneurship' concerning the main problem which have the surveyed entrepreneurs themselves pointed out as the greatest obstacle to the more successful activity of their firms. Those entrepreneurs, namely, who evaluated their activity as very successful in 1992 in 15% of cases, and in 2006 have done the same in almost one half smaller percentage of cases, did not mention as the main problem the state regulations and taxes (mentioned in just

15% of cases) nor the slowed down privatization (mentioned in just 2% of cases), the problems on which unanimously insist so much both partisans of neo-liberalism and of the 'Third way' and 'Risk Society'. These respondents pointed out in the first place to the 'insufficient buying power of the population' (in 49% of cases).

The connection between this partisan of 'true entrepreneurial society' and the partisans of both neo-liberalism and the 'Third Way' presents the fact that they all do not look for the causes of the insufficient payment capable demand in the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, but normalize it as a kind of natural calamity. This partisan of the 'entrepreneurial society' seems to suggest to readers to have patience because "the prospects are high that people in Serbia will still some time live their everyday life in the sign of 'difficult transition'" (Bolčić in *ibid*, 103).

3.3. Normalization of the class division of labor and institutionalization of the class conflict

Co-authors of the contribution „Post-socialist transformation and fragmentation of the working class – the case of Serbia and Croatia“ have already through the use of the key words in the title (Lazić Mladen, Cvejić Slobodan in *ibid*, 107) indirectly pointed out to the main similarity and the main difference between their own views and the views of the most often cited internationally known partisans of the 'Third Way'. The main similarity is contained in their common avoidance to use terms from the family of the word 'capitalism' for the designation of the process of social transformation in two republics of former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The main difference is contained in the approach to research of social structure from the angle of conflict of opposed social classes, and not from the angle of the invoked community of interdependent and socially responsible affiliates of different professions.

Closer analyses of these co-authors' theses, however, demonstrates that the editorial writer had good reasons to conclude that there exist more similarities than differences (*ibid* 18). For instance, co-authors atypically for the partisans of the 'Third Way' quote the original of Braverman's book *Work and Monopoly Capital* (1974) at the occasion of determination of the concept of the working class in the narrower sense so that it encompasses only non qualified, half-qualified and qualified manual workers, without or with the minimum of managing authorisations in the process of work, and excludes simple non manual operators for the sake of analyses' simplification (Lazić, Cvejić in *ibid*, 108). The co-authors, however, do not share Braverman's critical stance towards degradation of work through capitalist use of science and technology with the aim of raising the profit rate nor his conviction that capitalist division of labor is 'a crime against the person and against the humanity' (Braverman, 1974, 51). Very much like the partisans of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' these co-authors implicitly normalise the class division of labor as a self-understood constant. They pose to themselves the exclusive goal to

examine to what extent the elements of general atomisation and from without controlled homogenization of entire society due to totalized way of management of social reproduction by the collective-owner class (Lazić, Cvejić in *ibid*, 109) are replaced by the fragmentation of the working class after the introduction of political pluralism and the legalization and legitimisation of the market economy based on the private ownership (Lazić, Cvejić, in *Ibid* 112). The co-authors conclude on the basis of the empirical data on social mobility and reintegration, state, private and gray sector of employment, material position, trade union and political organising and value orientation, that the process of post-socialist transformation in both Serbia and Croatia, marked by the establishment of the authoritarian powers on the nationalist mobilisation and populist retorics, hempered the class homogenisation of workers and thus slowed down post/socialist transformation itself in return. In accordance with their value orientation on 'post-socialist transformation' co-authors in the positive context cite their finding that from 1989 to 2003 among affiliates of both layers of working class grew the consciousness that the government should interfere the least possible in the economics. On the other hand the co-authors mention in the negative context their finding that there came to the decrease in the conviction in the necessity of private property for the economic development (Lazić, Cvejić, in *ibid.*, 124). If they were less preoccupied by their orientation on the restauration and perpetuation of capitalism, co-authors could have on the basis of their own findings and the findings of another author's contribution to the same Collection concerning the lacking legitimacy of privatisation in Serbia and wider (Vratuša in *ibid*, 135-180), posed the question at the least for some future research whether the working class maybe prefers participatory forms of management of some form of collective property.⁶ Instead of such orientation of their future research, the co-authors conclude their contribution to the Collection with their assumption that the key factor of the homogenisation of the working class would be the process of 'European integrations' and 'strengthening of the labor market, increased employment but also more important trade union reform'. Trade unions, namely, 'would have to be ready to organise workers more massively in conditions of free labor market and capable to engage actively in the proces of collective negotiation, in order to articulate and defend the interests of the employed' (Lazić, Cvejić in *Ibid*, 127).

As can be seen from this citation, co-authors interpret the class interest of the working class in the manner of both the old and new social-democracy of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' exclusively as 'negotiation' of the representatives of the employed, of the employers and of the state, within the framework of normalised and unquestioned capitalist mode of production. Expecting that the free labor market contributes to the homogenisation of the working class, the co-authors neg-

⁶ Researchers who do not limit themselves to the theoretical-ideological paradigm of the normalization of capitalism, have detected the existence of just such demands of the working class for example in Latin America as well, researching the actual class struggle for workers' councils and socialism in Venezuela (Lebowitz, 2009).

lect that they have themselves noticed that the elements of the fragmentation of the working class existed also in the ‘self-management socialism’, first of all in the form of unequal level of qualifications, as well as that it came to the ever more expressed material differentiation and value inconsistency within and between all social groupations, as a consequence of the semi-market reforms introduced in the middle of the 1960's (Lazić, Cvejić, *ibid*, 110-111).

Mass firing of the employed as the manifestation of the acute crisis of the capital hyperaccumulation, gravely deformed the suppositions of tripartite negotiations precisely within the year in which the co-authors proposed it as the desirable strategy for the working class. It should be mentioned in this place that the co-authors themselves gave the excellent example for the inability and/or lack of will of the new social-democrats and other partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm to intercede in favor of the class interests of the workers. They reminded us namely that it came to light that as soon as social democrats came to power in Croatia in 1999, their main aim was to carry out the neo-liberal programme of transformation (Lazić, Cvejić in *ibid*, 115). Another writer, Callinicos, had as well underlined on the basis of research of social democrats in power in Western countries that „governments of the 'Third Way' continued the neoliberal politics of their conservative predecessors. They have promoted the interests of the multinational corporations, privatized areas where Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher dared not go, and allowed social and economic inequality to continue growing” (Callinicos, 2001: 7).

4. Conclusion

On the basis of the presented critical content analysis of the main theses, key concepts and findings of internationally known and domestic sociologists partisans of the ‘Third Way’ and ‘Risk Society’ theoretical, methodological and practical political paradigm in their search for the ‘alternative to (old) social democracy and to neo-liberalism’ (*Ibid*, 14), we can conclude that the actual mainstream international and domestic sociological research is characterized by the negation of the capitalist character of contemporary societies and invention of fashionable new names for it. Very much like in the epoch of institutionalization of sociology as the science at the beginning of the twentieth century, majority of sociologists at the beginning of the twenty first century also opted for the positivist and not for the critical interpretation of the main functions of sociology.

We can resume the answer to the title question „Where does the 'Third Way' lead?“ in the following way: ‘Third way’ and ‘Risk Society’ paradigm of the allegedly ‘new’ social democracy, leads to the attempt to legitimise, indefinitely perpetuate and normalize the effects of contradictory capitalist social relations of life reproduction on the basis of implicit or explicit ideological claim that there is no alternative to these relations. The suggestion that there is no alternative to the ‘global anonymous control’ of the financial power of (not)investment (Beck, 2007)

and of the market regulation of life reproduction, reduces the social development strategy of the old and new social democracy to the attempt to mitigate the hardships of global capital accumulation which is causing these hardships. This reactive instead of pro-active strategy is systemically limited by the contradictions of the capitalist production for the profit of the few instead for the development of human potentials of all.

Theoretical and practical assumptions of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' paradigm's partisans, make it impossible to both internationally known and domestic sociologists who accept this paradigm to fulfil the 'main aim of sociology to present and explain the earlier and actual directions of social development' (Ibid 18). This holds true especially during the actual systemic global capital accumulation crisis, which empirically demonstrates inherent contradictions of both capitalist relations of life reproduction and 'Third Way' paradigm, stimulating the search for more just, democratic and ecologically more sustainable alternatives of social relations' organisation.

In conditions of historically reoccurring trend of social democrats being again preoccupied with some variant of the 'Third Way' and 'Risk Society' moralistically modified neo-liberal ideology, while the global capital accumulation crisis culminates, it will again depend primarily on the capability of self-conscientisation and self-organisation of modern hired servants at all levels of qualification. whether there will come during the actual crisis to their homogenisation around the revolutionary strategy of abolishment of the capitalist relations of exploitation and repression. It is just these exploitative relations that reproduce fragmentation of modern slaves and 'risks' of their degraded quality of life.

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Вера Вратуша

Филозофски факултет
Београдски универзитет

С а ж е т а к

КУДА ВОДИ 'ТРЕЋИ ПУТ'?

У раду ауторка испитује неуобичајену појаву да теоријску, методолошку и практичко-политичку парадигму „трећег пута“ између „старе“ социјалдемократије и неолиберализма, коју су развили социолози Велике Британије, Немачке и Сједињених држава 1990тих година, писац предговора за Зборник налаза најновијих социолошких истраживања процеса друштвеног преображавања у Србији, заједно с осталим

сарадницима, изричито промовише и то, више од десет година касније, као најприменији приступ испитивању савремених друштава. Необичност ове појаве се састоји у чињеници да крај прве деценије XXI века управо представља историјски тренутак у којем експлозивна манифестација системске глобалне кризе акумулације капитала емпиријски разоткрива унутрашње противречности како капиталистичког начина производње тако и парадигме „Трећег пута“. Кључни налаз критичке анализе садржаја главних теза међународно познатих и домаћих заговорника парадигме „Трећег пута“ јесте да оне воде ка легитимизацији и овековечењу капиталистичких односа производње и нормализацији „ризика“ које ови друштвени односи репродукују, на темељу имплицитне или експлицитне идеолошке тврдње да ти односи немају алтернативу.

Кључне речи : „трећи пут“, социјалдемократија, неолиберализам, системска криза, нормализација, капитализам.